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Top Secret 219

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Friday 30 September 1977

CG NIDC 77/228C

On file Dept of Agriculture release
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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION
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Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP79T00975A030300010086-0

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Friday, 30 September 1977.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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NIGERIA: Garba Hits Critics

25X1 [] Nigerian Foreign Minister Garba, the object of recent criticism in the Nigerian press for his pro-US statements, this week defended the propriety of Head of State Obasanjo's scheduled visit to the US next month.

25X1 [] Garba said he hopes Obasanjo's visit to the US and the trip by President Carter to Nigeria in November would reinforce "our efforts in the liberation of southern Africa." He reportedly said the Carter administration has been more positive than previous US governments toward the cause of African liberation and that Nigeria should therefore cooperate with the US.

25X1 [] The press has criticized Garba for publicly praising Ambassador Young and the UK-US Rhodesian proposals. The Foreign Minister, addressing the Nigerian national press club before leaving for the UN General Assembly, criticized the press for displaying a "certain tendency" to misjudge and not understand the rationale behind Nigerian foreign policy.

25X1 [] The press criticism of Garba has not extended to Obasanjo, and two government-controlled national papers have remained editorially silent on Obasanjo's and President Carter's planned visits. Some commentary on Obasanjo's visit that appeared in the local media suggests, however, that some newspapermen and the more militantly inclined students believe the visit is inappropriate before US African policy yields concrete results.

25X1 [] Rumors are flying that Obasanjo may soon announce that he will visit the Soviet Union. If he does, he may hope to reinforce Nigeria's image as a nonaligned state and counter criticism from among the more articulate nationalists in Nigeria who want the government to maintain greater distance in relations with the US. []

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CUBA: No Change in US Policy

25X1 [] In a speech on Wednesday, Cuban President Fidel Castro acknowledged that US-Cuban relations were improving, but he gave no indication of significant changes in basic Cuban policy toward the US.

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[] The speech was the Cuban leader's first public discussion of relations with the US since the US Interests Section opened in Havana on 1 September. Castro reaffirmed Cuba's determination not to pay compensation for nationalized US properties unless it received payment for "damages" resulting from the economic blockade by the US and past US "aggressions."

[] He did not, however, repeat the Cuban position that no further improvement is possible until the blockade is lifted and thus left the door open for the continuation of a series of smaller reciprocal gestures. With regard to the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay, he suggested that the Cuban Government still believes that this issue need not be dealt with until after the problems of the blockade and compensation are resolved.

[] Castro's primary purpose in raising the issue of relations with the US may have been to caution the Cuban people against expecting major economic benefits from an improved relationship.

[] The Cuban President emphasized that the process of normalization would be gradual and that the end of the blockade would not bring an end to shortages. He stated that while the US would become a new market for Cuban sugar and tobacco, Cuba has firmly established its trade relations over the past 17 years and cannot be expected to change them significantly.//

[] //He also noted that Cuba would buy food products and capital goods from the US, rather than "trinkets." In addition, Cuba's trade will be restricted because it lacks hard currency; world prices for sugar are low and Cuba has a limited capacity to borrow money because it is already heavily indebted.//

[] Castro's remarks also seemed designed to ease possible concerns among hard-liners in the Cuban leadership over the implications of improved ties with a long-time enemy. He stressed that normalized relations with the US would cause no changes in Cuba's foreign policy or its close relationship with the USSR.

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USSR: Harvest and Grain Report

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[REDACTED] //CIA's estimate in early September of the Soviet grain crop remains unchanged; we believe the Soviets will harvest 220 million tons of grains. We now estimate that Soviet grain purchases this year will be between 15 million and 20 million tons, up 5 million tons from our previous estimate.//

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[REDACTED] Soviet officials earlier this month made informal and somewhat ambiguous statements that estimated grain production in the USSR would be as low as 208 million tons and no more than 220 million tons. The US Department of Agriculture yesterday lowered its estimate of the Soviet grain harvest to 215 million tons, down 5 million tons from its forecast in early September. The USDA's estimate is still within its 210 million- to 230 million-ton range projected at the time.

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[REDACTED] CIA believes that [REDACTED] data currently available do not support lowering the estimate of the Soviet grain harvest at this time. Harvesting conditions remained mostly favorable in Kazakhstan through this past Sunday. If information received over the next 10 days indicates a deterioration in conditions there because of heavy rains or snow, we may lower our estimate [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] CIA now estimates that the USSR will purchase between 15 million and 20 million tons of grain, up 5 million tons from our previous estimate. The purchases, most of which will be imported during fiscal 1978, probably will be evenly divided between wheat and feedgrains, with the US supplying more than three-fourths of the total amount. [REDACTED]

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USSR: Brezhnev on Ethiopia-Somalia

[Redacted] Soviet President Brezhnev, in a toast to visiting Angolan President Neto on Wednesday, described the Ethiopian-Somali conflict as "regrettable" and as hindering the liberation movement throughout Africa. Brezhnev is the first Soviet leader to comment publicly on the conflict in the Horn of Africa.

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[] While admitting that present borders in Africa were drawn by the old colonial powers and are thus often unfair, Brezhnev argued that the territorial integrity of each state must still be respected. To do otherwise, he said, would play into the hands of "imperialist forces and their African accomplices" who are attempting to destroy African unity. Brezhnev noted that the principle of territorial integrity was recognized in both the Helsinki accords and the charter of the Organization of African Unity.

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[] Brezhnev's championing of the principle of territorial integrity can be seen as an implicit criticism of Somalia. His comments, however, were considerably softer and more balanced than those in the Soviet media recently. Since the visit of Somali President Siad to Moscow in late August, the Soviet media have increasingly favored Ethiopia and sharpened criticism of Somalia.

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[] The Soviet leader seemed to be appealing to both Somalia and Ethiopia to end the fighting. This would seem to indicate that while the USSR continues to support Ethiopia in its struggle to keep the Ogaden--as it has privately and publicly stated on several occasions recently--it is not yet ready to write off Somalia.

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[] Brezhnev reiterated the standard Soviet line on other African issues. He emphasized Soviet opposition to "the last bastions of racism and colonialism in southern Africa"--a clear reference to South Africa and Rhodesia--and accused the West of trying to build military strongholds in Africa and aid Pretoria in its nuclear weapons program.

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[] Brezhnev offered the expected praise for Neto and Angola and promised continued Soviet support. Both the TASS account of the meetings and the speeches of the two leaders indicate that internal and external threats to Angolan security provided the major force of the talks. Neto reportedly suspects Soviet complicity in the attempt last May to overthrow his government and is trying to reduce Angola's dependence on the USSR.

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[] Although Brezhnev and Neto probably discussed recent developments concerning Rhodesia and Namibia, the press accounts of their meetings made no mention of these subjects. []

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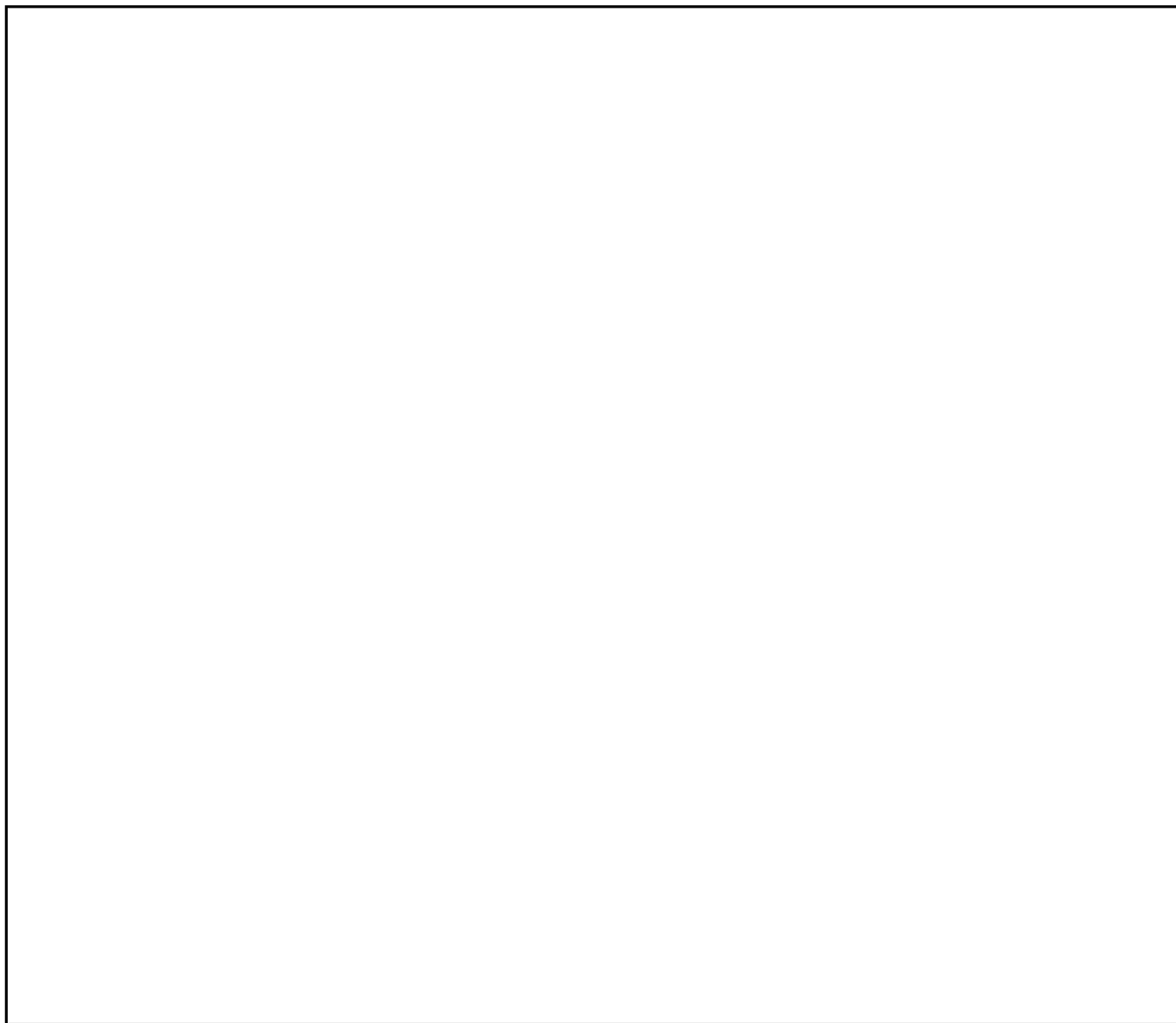
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ITALY: Local Elections Postponed

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 Italian political leaders are again considering the postponement of an important round of local elections scheduled for November. The government has reportedly prepared a decree rescheduling the elections for next spring. If a consensus emerges in favor of postponement, the cabinet could approve the decree at its meeting today.

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[] About 10 percent of the voters are scheduled to go to the polls; these elections will be the most significant test of popular sentiment since the parliamentary election last year in which the Communist Party scored unprecedented gains.

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[] Prime Minister Andreotti and many other Christian Democratic leaders favor postponement because they fear the electoral campaign could jeopardize the fragile agreement under which the Communists permit the minority government to survive. Rhetoric sparked by the approach of the elections has already strained relations between the Christian Democrats and Communists.

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[] Communist leaders want to put the elections off because they would like more time to persuade traditional supporters that the party's cooperation with the Christian Democrats is paying off politically. The party also fears its support could drop in some areas where the performance of relatively new Communist local administrations has fallen short of popular expectations.

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[] For their part, the major leaders of most smaller parties would probably go along with a postponement because they are mutually concerned that the elections might reveal a further gravitation of the electorate toward the Christian Democrats and Communists.

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[] The principal opposition to a delay comes from a group of Christian Democratic, Social Democratic, and Liberal politicians who argue that one should not tamper with the democratic process for political convenience. Some of these leaders also believe that the polemical nature of a campaign would counter what they see as a steady drift by the Christian Democrats toward closer relations with the Communists.

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[] This group managed last summer to head off a move to reschedule the elections, but advocates of a delay seem to be working harder to win their point this time around. []

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WEST GERMANY: Antiterrorist Plan

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[] *Concern over terrorism dominated the annual convention last week of West Germany's Christian Social Union, the*

conservative Bavarian affiliate of the opposition Christian Democratic Union. The convention adopted an "offensive program" for restoring and improving domestic security.

25X1. [] In drafting its antiterrorist program, the Christian Social Union took pains to avoid fueling domestic and foreign criticism that it was spearheading an antidemocratic reaction. The program calls for strengthening existing laws; specifically, it proposes doubling the penalty for establishing terrorist organizations, making parole of convicted terrorists more difficult, and increasing the penalty for aiding terrorists. It also calls for strengthening the personnel and resources of the security forces but avoids taking a position on the highly controversial question of legalizing the death penalty.

25X1 [] These proposals will receive broad political and public support; they parallel in substance, if not in detail, informal Christian Democratic proposals published in July that, in turn, were based on ideas worked out by West Germany's federal and state interior ministers. The final part of the Christian Social Union's program, however, calling for harsh measures against proponents of "leftist anarchism and terrorism," is politically explosive. It embodies the party's desire to indict the Social Democratic Party and the government for tolerating left-wing radicalism.

25X1 [] The Christian Social Union convention in other respects was, as expected, a demonstration of party unity behind Strauss. The delegates overwhelmingly re-elected Strauss to a ninth term as party chairman. To achieve this unity, however, Strauss had to keep buried his differences with party officials who criticized his temporary rupture with the Christian Democrats last winter.

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BRIEFS

West Germany

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[] West German Chancellor Schmidt and state leaders may reach a tax compromise today that would speed Bundestag ratification of the government's economic stimulation program. The government initially proposed an increase in tax exemptions that would have benefited all taxpayers equally. The compromise involves the adoption of a sliding tax scale to bridge the gap between the flat 22-percent tax rate currently applicable to the lower range of taxable incomes and the progressive rates applied to higher income.

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[] A sliding scale would most benefit low and average income group; this would enhance appeal to the Social Democrats. At the same time, it would preserve the principle of progressive tax relief favored by the opposition.

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[] The \$3.2-billion annual price tag tentatively attached to the new tax proposals would raise the total cost of the government's stimulation package to about \$6 billion, up from the \$4.4-billion cost of the earlier proposal. As a result, the stimulative impact of the package also would be substantially larger.

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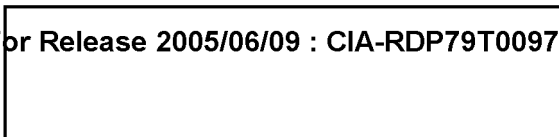
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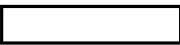



Colombia

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 The Colombian Government's handling of the strike of 14 September has resulted in further factionalism within the ruling Liberal Party. President Lopez asked Minister of Government Pardo to resign earlier this week, and the remaining cabinet members have since collectively submitted their resignations. Lopez is now free to reorganize his administration.

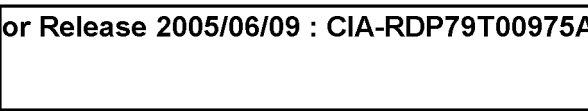
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 Pardo's ouster resulted from his public criticism of party officials who failed to support the administration during the labor crisis. His comments embarrassed Lopez and further divided the Liberal Party at a time when pre-election solidarity is of great importance. 

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